

The Ambiguity of Consent: Teaching Rape Culture alongside Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* and the Renaissance Sonnet Tradition

In recent years there has been, thankfully, a robust public discussion about sexual assault and rape culture on college campuses. This has been a difficult conversation to have for a number of complex reasons, some clearly political, legal and institutional, others more vaguely cultural. As instructors, the conversation can be especially difficult for the simple fact that college rape is not an abstraction for our students. Our classroom is partially made up of victims, potential victims, rapists and potential rapists. Nevertheless, “rape culture” necessarily remains an abstraction. When activists and theorists discuss rape culture, they are often not discussing individual agency, but are outlining the broader cultural norms that foster and encourage rape. And when we discuss rape culture in the classroom we are not operating as councilors, therapists or police officers working to comfort victims, locate criminals and dole out punishments. We are acting as theorists and scholars attempting to explore the abstract concepts that make rape thinkable. Nevertheless, it is easy for students to feel attacked, shamed or traumatized when discussing how rapists and victims operate within their culture. We may be accustomed to students who are unengaged in our classroom discussions, but in this case, our students might be too engaged.

I have found that Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* provides a useful text to begin (or perhaps further) this discussion because the poem provides students with an almost perfect combination of historical distance and personal identification. They can recognize that many of the specific discourses about sexuality and courtship that Marlowe explores – such as the cult of virginity, platonic dualism and the melancholic lover – are no longer a part of our conscious understanding of sexuality, while also recognizing the continuing relevance of the broader critique about the role of courtship scripts on sexual violence in their own lives. Indeed, as Robert A. Logan observes, the tone of the poem actively encourages a “rational detachment” that further distances students from this politically and emotionally charged topic.¹

To discuss “Renaissance rape culture,” I encourage an admittedly radical and possibly anachronistic reading of *Hero and Leander*. That is, it is probably going too far to argue that Marlowe invented the modern concept of rape culture, and if that is going too far, then it is certainly going too far to suggest that he also provided a very modern critique of rape culture. A careful scholar would be on firmer ground simply asserting that Marlowe used the erotic narrative to mock the dominant masculine and feminine tropes of his own poetic tradition.² Nevertheless, by framing this text anachronistically around the concept of rape culture, I can highlight for my students the relevance of the text while maintaining a historical distance that allows us to talk about rape freely and without too much personal identification. I explicitly focus on Marlowe's critique of the courtship rituals and gender roles that he inherited from the sonnet tradition, and I attempt to show students how these roles and scripts lead to the violence of the consummation scene. I then invite comparisons to our own society in order to explore the extent to which these roles and scripts are still with us today and continue to contribute to a culture that fosters and often condones sexual violence.

In the pages that follow, I will tentatively argue for this position, while describing how I teach *Hero and Leander* in my sophomore early British literature survey – though I will finish by suggesting ways this lesson could be adapted to an upper division or graduate level course. Because my class tends to be discussion based and organized around a small group/large group workshop model, I will provide key talking points and typical student responses instead of

lecture notes. So it is necessary to provide the overall caveat, “results may vary.” However, I have taught this unit or lesson nine times and have found that student responses are fairly predictable, and the ones reproduced below are representative. Of course, “students” are not a homogenous group. I teach at a small, liberal arts school in North Carolina. Most of my students grew up in the suburbs of Raleigh or surrounding small towns and have a religious (often Baptist) background. Although their upbringing no doubt inflected their engagement with the texts, I haven’t noticed any regional or religious specificity to their responses. That being said, a different demographic of students may respond in ways I can’t anticipate here.

This lesson generally falls on the sixth week of a fourteen week class. I introduce Marlowe after walking students through the sonnet tradition (my students typically read some combination of Spenser, Sidney, Wyatt and Surrey).³ During these early lessons, I highlight the tendency of Renaissance sonnets to narrate and reify existing constructions of masculinity and femininity, while embracing broader cultural formations. For instance, I show students that the figures of the frustrated melancholic lover and the distant, chaste beloved emerge out of catholic monastic thought that values chastity, and we trace how this ideology merges with platonic dualism, which privileges the mind over the body. We also explore how dualism and monasticism dovetails with all sorts of misogynistic literature that link women with the material body and men with the spiritual and rational mind. (“The Wife of Bathe” demonstrates this nicely).

In my experience, students enjoy and are surprised by the link between women and the body since it is so foreign from their own experiences. They readily appreciate that our culture tends to view masculinity as overtly sexual and links femininity with the “higher” facilities: emotions, interpersonal relationships, romance, etc. (almost any sitcom or rom-com can be referenced to demonstrate this point). So they are often amazed to learn that these distinctions are culturally dependent and not universal. As suggested above, this historical difference also helps create a distance between the student and the text from which to critically view the uncomfortable outcomes of early modern gender norms. That is, it is always easier to explore how *their* culture was violent and sexist before discussing *our* violent and sexist culture.

Furthermore, students tend to gravitate towards a Platonic or Neoplatonic distinction between soul and body. As decades of research have shown, second year college students tend to view the world in binaries, but are just beginning to see how those neat categories do not always hold.⁴ So they can easily grasp the binary of soul/body, but are also ready to explore how the sonnets tend to complicate that distinction. For instance, we discuss how post-reformation English writers such as Spenser attempted to revise the sonnet tradition to better reflect protestant ideals. Therefore, *Amoretti*, which of course ends in marriage and consummation, can claim to produce a pure love that is also sexual and productive in opposition to, say, the love between Petrarch and Laura, which must remain chaste to be pure.

Enter *Hero and Leander*. I begin by pointing out Marlowe’s decision to write an erotic narrative instead of a sonnet sequence. Although the vogue for sonnets had not yet reached its peak in the late 1580s (when Marlowe probably wrote the work), he would almost certainly have been aware of Sidney’s contribution to the genre and would have access to Surrey’s and Wyatt’s translations and adaptations of Petrarch. This is to suggest that *not* writing a sonnet was a conscious decision. To buttress this observation, I direct their attention to the opening lines of the poem and suggest that the hyperbolic description of Hero’s beauty is perhaps meant as a parody of the chaste lover of the sonnet tradition.⁵ When framed as a parody, students can typically catch the humor. For example, the description of Hero’s breath is clearly not to be taken

in earnest: “Many would praise the sweet smell as she passed, / When ‘twas the odor which her breath forth cast;/And there for honey, bees have sought in vain” (21-23). I also point to Marlowe’s or the narrator’s rejection of the blazon (a poetic technique they learned during our discussions of sonnets): “but my rude pen / Can hardly blazon forth the loves of men, much less of powerful gods” (69-72). Although I admit that Marlowe is being less than forthright here since he then goes on to offer a blazon in praise of Leander’s beauty (good opportunity to teach the poetic trope paralipsis), I do argue that this sleight of hand, in conjunction with the hyperbole of the opening lines, represents an attempt to distance himself from the sonnet tradition, as does his decision to describe male, not female, beauty.

After this initial set up, I ask the students (typically within small groups) to find other ways this poem reacts to or revises the sonnet tradition. They are also asked to provide textual evidence to support their claims. As cautioned earlier, results vary, but with some prodding students typically produce the following observations and point to the following lines:

- Hero and Leander have sex at the end of the poem but are not married, unlike the unrequited love of the melancholic lover or the chaste marriage of Spenser.
 - 770-795
- The third person narration allows Marlowe to describe both Leander and Hero’s beauty, unlike the first person (typically male) voice of sonnets that focuses on female beauty.
 - Leander, 10-50
 - Hero, 75-90
- The sex is graphically described, unlike the platonic love of the Petrarchan tradition
 - 540-554
 - 746-795
- Leander explicitly argues against the value of chastity, unlike the melancholic lover’s praise of purity.
 - 200-294
- Hero and Leander fall in love instantly, in direct opposition to the long, drawn out courtship of the sonnet sequences.
 - 160-176
- Hero is described as a desiring subject, and not just the object of desire
 - 502-506
- Leander is objectified by a female (Hero) and male (Neptune) character.
 - 650-699

It is important to note that there are exceptions to all of these observations about the “typical” sonnet sequence. Shakespeare famously describes male beauty, as does the more obscure Renaissance poet Richard Barnfield. And Anne Lok and Marry Wroth provide crucial female voices within the sonnet tradition. Furthermore, the praise of female chastity is always complicated by a condemnation of the “cruelty” of the chaste woman. However, within the mainstream Petrarchan tradition that I highlight with my students, these insights are more or less correct since Marlowe wrote his poem before the sonnet craze of the 1590s, when poets revised the conventions of the sonnet and subverted the expectations of the audience.

These observations then lead to a host of interconnected conclusions. Leander is feminized by becoming a desired object, while Hero is masculinized through her desire for Leander. This blurring of gender roles problematizes the sexual differences established within the sonnet tradition. And the third person omniscient narrator suggests that this perspective on gender roles is more objective and realistic than the romanticized roles explored in first person

sonnets (this insight can later be problematized, but experienced instructors will recognize how quickly students leap to this conclusion because they fail to recognize ironic descriptions and unreliable narrators). Thus, the mutual attraction described by the narrator of “Hero and Leander” is depicted as a natural force, alienated from the characters’ conscious will. The attack on chastity can also be read as a critique of Catholic monasticism and potentially the cult of the Virgin Queen.⁶ It is useful here to contrast this depiction of attraction with Sidney’s conventionally Petrarchan and Neoplatonist second sonnet, which reflects on how slowly real love is produced: “Not at first sight, nor with a dribbled shot / Love gave the wound, which while I breathe will bleed (1-2)”. Clearly, Marlowe is exploring a much different version of love and attraction than is typically described and privileged within the sonnet tradition.

After this discussion, I ask: why does Hero run away from Leander? Why does she not immediately give in to her desire? Why does she make Leander jump through all of these hoops, and put forth all of these arguments, to accomplish what she always wanted in the first place? The following lines provide a catalyst for this discussion:

These arguments he used, and many more,
 Wherewith she yielded, that was won before
 Hero’s looks yielded, but her words made war:
 Women are won when they begin to jar (329-332).

I suggest that Hero and Leander are essentially following scripts they inherited (this provides an opportunity to explain Script Theory) from the sonnet tradition.⁷ Here I am echoing J.B. Stern, who long ago observed, “We [the readers] share in the amused, detached observation of two individuals moving freshly and with bewilderment, embarrassment and rapture along a route which is so well-worn.”⁸ But where Stern attributes this bewilderment to the characters’ inexperience, I trace it to their mutual attraction. Even though Hero wants to sleep with Leander, she can’t bring herself to give in because, if we believe the sonnet tradition, she isn’t supposed to. Hence, Hero’s internal conflict which is the subject of much of the poem. For instance, “And like a planet, moving several ways, / At one self instant, she, poor soul, assays, / Loving, not to love at all, and every part / Strove to resist the motions of her heart;” (361-364).⁹

But even when she overcomes her hesitancy and actively tries to seduce Leander, he doesn’t know what to do. For example, when she drops her fan, Leander doesn’t understand that he should probably pick it up and use it as an excuse to see her again (495-500). Or when she entices him to her bed, he “as a brother with his sister toyed, / supposing nothing else was to be done, / Now he her favor and good will had won” (536-538).¹⁰ He doesn’t know how to respond to her advances because she has broken the rules of the seduction game. By playing the desiring subject, Hero has become, paradoxically, an asexual being because, according to the seduction script that Leander is attempting to follow, sexual objects cannot be co-agents.

In short, both characters try to follow the rules that the sonnet tradition lays out, but neither of them wants to enact the script. Sonnet tradition (at least before Spenser) dictates that the woman remain the unattainable chaste object of desire, while the man remains the frustrated but dedicated and long-suffering desiring subject – the melancholic lover. When these roles are inverted and problematized through mutual attraction, which the poem suggests is always the way love works (“Who ever loved, that loved not at first sight?”), the characters are unable to act. They become ineffectual agents once their lives no longer conform to art.¹¹

This distinction between reality and art can further be explored by pointing students back to the opening scene, where Hero is described as all artifice: “Her veil was artificial flowers and leaves, / Whose workmanship both man and beast deceives” (19-20). Her chastity from the very

beginning was linked to an artistic (that is, Petrarchan) tradition.¹² In other words, her virginity has always been pretense. Leander essentially makes this point when he argues that virginity is absence:

This idol which you term Virginity,
Is neither essence, subject to the eye,
No, nor to any one exterior sense,

...

Of that which hath no being do not boast:

Things that are not at all are never lost.” (269-271;275-276).

Virginity is then defined by lack of essence through a complex logic. Idols and art are mere surface pretense just as virginity is also only a pose. And this pose is constructed through art, through a sonnet tradition that privileges platonic love and chastity.

From here I transition to the consummation scene (765-806). After reading the passage, I ask: is this scene describing a rape? That is, does Hero consent? They easily recognize that she never says yes, but she also never says no, so they tend to rest their interpretation on her post-coital reaction. Did she enjoy it? Did she regret it? Did she “ask for it”? Their reading strategy allows me to challenge the assumptions built into this interpretation. Can one retroactively consent? Is enjoyment, attraction, or seduction the same as consent?

But even employing these assumptions does not help the students find a satisfactory answer to the question of consent. In fact, like John Leonard, I have found that students locate a lot more ambiguity in this final scene than most scholars.¹³ For instance, they see the lines “now she wished this night were never done, / and sighed to think upon th’ approaching sun” as both describing Hero’s pleasure and her regret (785-786). That is, they read the lines as simultaneously suggesting she wishes the night would never end and that it was already over. Leonard wisely notes that while “This reading is grammatically awkward ... there is still something strangely right about it.”¹⁴ I think that the students find ambiguity here because the line glances at the broader ambiguities about consent and agency found throughout the poem. That is, the ambiguity of the situation depends upon the inability for either actor to have true agency.

Here I ask students (and you the reader) to reflect on Marlowe’s achievement. He has carefully constructed a situation where consent is all but unknowable because according to the rules of the game, Hero can’t fully admit to her own desire and so cannot actively consent: “yet was mute, / And neither would deny nor grant his suit” (423-424). Her silence and passivity (like the silence and passivity of the love object of sonnets) allow Leander and the reader to interpret her actions any way they wish. This context helps explain the martial imagery associated with the sexual act and Leander’s inability to perform when she does offer consent. The poem shows us that when the sonnet script runs into mutual attraction, consent becomes difficult to determine and violence all but inevitable. As Cindy L. Carlson observes, within the world of the poem, “Relations between men and women seem to come freighted with issues of dominance and rape.”¹⁵ I know of no earlier text (and not many later ones) that provides this much context for sexual assault.

This then leads to a conversation about rape culture. It isn’t just individual actions that contribute to rape but a whole host of gender norms and institutional logics that create a situation conducive to rape. When a culture assumes that while resisting sex “women use but half their strength” (780) and that “women are won when they begin to jar” (332), women are unable to fully consent to sex and men are unable to understand when women give consent. The ambiguity

that students find in the final scene reflects the ambiguity of consent that is produced by the gender roles and courtship scripts normalized and constructed through sonnets. It is no wonder, then, that students overread the ambiguity of these final lines. Traditional-aged college students are often enacting similar courtship scripts, which produce exactly this type of ambiguity.

To explore some of the continuities between sixteenth and twenty-first century courtship rituals, I ask students to find links between Marlowe's culture and our own. Do these courtship rituals look familiar? Do our gender norms produce similar results? Do we maintain similar ideas about female chastity? Although unlikely to maintain the moral importance of female chastity, students generally identify with the playing-hard-to-get game, the no-means-yes game, and the gender norms associated with the pursued and the pursuer. In fact, I regularly ask students whether they would rather pursue a love interest or be pursued. Inevitably, the vast majority of female students wish to be pursued and the majority of male students prefer to pursue. This quick poll can show students that some of the gender norms that lead to this dangerous ambiguity are still with us. In other words, students can see how they are still playing out cultural roles and scripts that were developed 400 years ago.

Comparing *Hero and Leander* to contemporary cultural artifacts can also help demonstrate some of the continuities between Renaissance and modern courtship rituals. Robin Thicke's "Blurred Lines" provides a near perfect illustration of the way that our culture's normalized gender roles can lead to the ambiguity of consent. This song, which uses the blurred lines of consent as a seduction technique, is already becoming dated, so readers of this article may need to find their own (or ask students to supply) examples of songs that rely on a similar technique. Given the ubiquity of rape culture in our society, I fear that finding such songs will not be a problem. In any case, Thicke's song (or others like it) also provides an opportunity to explore the nuance of the tone of *Hero and Leander*. Thicke is clearly reveling in and exploiting rape culture and the ambiguity of consent since he is eroticizing this ambiguity. On the other hand, it isn't clear (to me and most readers) if Marlowe is glorifying or critiquing the violence of Renaissance courtship scripts.¹⁶ However, this requires a sophisticated grasp of poetic techniques and a trained ear for tone, which may be more appropriate for upper level students.

I often ask students to identify their own examples, but sometimes offer a few more of my own to demonstrate the long tradition that *Hero and Leander* is taking place within. For instance, Keat's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" privileges chastity over consummation by eroticizing the moment before the kiss. Yeats's "Leda and the Swan" (much like the consummation scene in Marlowe's poem) uses the ambiguity of language to reflect the ambiguity of consent. And Bob Dylan's "I Don't Believe You (She Acts like We Never Have Met)" anxiously narrates a male lover's inability to know in retrospect if a woman had consented.

At this point statistics help drive home the points highlighted above. The often repeated statistic that one in four college women will experience sexual assault by the time they leave campus is worth sharing, because many students are not aware that the numbers are this high. In fact, I often start the conversation with this figure as part of a trigger warning: I tell students at the beginning of class that we will be discussing rape and rape culture and warn them that this is not merely an abstract idea or something that only happened "back then," but that sexual violence is still common in our own culture. Thus, we need to be sensitive to victims, who may in fact be sitting in class.¹⁷ This is especially important while discussing *Hero and Leander* because so much of the poem's violence seems played for laughs (indeed, in my experience both male and female students sometimes laugh at the violence). But as Leonard admits, "I find *Hero and Leander* to be a funny poem – until the end when Hero's exposure leaves a nasty taste in the

mouth.”¹⁸ I agree: the poem both produces laughter and encourages us (if we are sensitive to the subtexts of the poem) to be horrified by our own complicity in the humor of the violence. This can put students (especially victimized students) in a very uncomfortable position, for which they should be prepared. In fact, it seems to have put critics in an uncomfortable position; as Leonard points out “sexual coercion haunts much criticism of *Hero and Leander*, but critics are reluctant to utter the word ‘rape.’”¹⁹

By the end of the conversation, I find it helpful to reiterate these statistics and suggest reasons why rape is so prevalent in our society by pointing out that many men who commit rape don’t think they did anything wrong. A recent study from *Violence and Gender* found that thirty-two percent of the men they surveyed admitted to forcing women to have sex with them but denied that their acts constituted rape. The study concludes, “The use of force ... might be seen as an acceptable means to reach one’s goal, or the woman’s ‘no’ is perceived as a token resistance consistent with stereotypical gender norms.”²⁰ In other words, during courtship and seduction “women use but half their strength,” (780) and “women are won when they begin to jar” (332).

The California law that makes positive affirmation the only acceptable form of consent can also help clarify this discussion. Whatever the students think of the efficacy or wisdom of this law, they generally see that the state is attempting to interrupt the ambiguity produced through rape culture. I also point out the work on rape free cultures, which suggests that rape is not inevitable but the product of cultural norms that we can trace back (in part thanks to Marlowe) at least 400 years.²¹

I suggested above ways that this unit can be adjusted for upper division classes. In addition, this lesson could also be expanded to graduate level classes that explore editing theory and reception studies. Because Marlowe’s text is unstable (unfinished, extent in a “corrupt” version), the history of the text can be used to investigate the reception of Marlowe’s text and its tone.²² For instance, one could compare Chapman’s moralized adaptation to Marlowe’s version to suggest that the challenge to gender norms was too radical for his society.²³ One could also explore the ways in which subsequent editors have attempted to sanitize the text, suggesting its continued subversive potential.²⁴ Furthermore, since my class covers literature from *Beowulf* to Aphra Behn, there is no time to explore Marlowe’s debt to Ovid and his participation in the 1580’s trend of erotic narratives.²⁵ An upper division class or graduate class could read Ovid (including Marlowe’s translation) and Shakespeare’s *Rape of Lucrece* to trace a tradition of courtship rituals that existed in competition with the Petrarchan tradition.²⁶ Likewise, Marlowe’s appropriation of Empedocles’s ideas about the natural role of strife and love within the cosmos can also be introduced to suggest that Marlowe did not see the violence associated with sex as culturally dependent (*pace* my own reading).²⁷ Rather, he saw such violence as an inevitable part of humanity in that it was linked to the natural functioning of the universe. In short, by adding companion texts and tracing other influences, a more nuanced reading of Marlowe (and by extension rape culture) could be developed.

In any case, given the prevalence of rape culture and the devastating effects of sexual assault, there is no reason why non-majors, majors and graduate students should not be reading this remarkable and still relevant poem. Indeed, although I began by suggesting that no careful scholar or historian would claim that Marlowe invented the concept of rape culture, given all the remarkable continuities between his culture and ours and the parallels between his satire of gender roles and our own critiques, perhaps it isn’t far from the truth. But even if it isn’t historically “true,” pursuing this claim is almost certainly pedagogically useful.

¹ Robert A. Logan, "Perspective in Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*: Engaging Our Detachment," in "A Poet and a filthy Play-maker" *New Essays on Christopher Marlowe*, ed. Kenneth Friedenreich, Roma Gill, and Constance B. Kuriyama (New York: AMS Press, 1988), 280.

² In general, my reading of *Hero and Leander* follows, but in many ways extends, those of John Leonard and L.E. Semler, so for those interested in related but more scholarly readings of the poem, see Leonard, "Marlowe's Doric Music: Lust and Aggression in *Hero and Leander*," *English Literary Renaissance* 30, no. 1 (2000): 55-76 and Semler, "Marlovian Therapy: The Chastisement of Ovid in *Hero and Leander*," *English Literary Renaissance* 35, no.2 (2005): 159-186.

³ All of these texts can be found in *The Norton Anthology*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York: Norton, 2012), Vol. B. I use this edition in my class and so will be referencing this version of *Hero and Leander* throughout and citing in text.

⁴ For a useful summary of these studies, see Michael B. Paulson and Charles T. Wells, "Domain Differences in the Epistemological Beliefs of College Students," *Research in Higher Education* 39, no. 4 (1998): esp. 367-369.

⁵ For a description of Marlowe's mockery of the Petrarchan tradition, see William Walsh, "Sexual Discovery and Renaissance Morality in Marlowe's 'Hero and Leander,'" *Studies in English Literature* 12, no. 1 (1972): 44-46. S. Ann Collins also notes Marlowe's satire of conventional love poetry. Collins, "Sudrie Shapes, Committing Headdie Ryots, Incest, Rapes: Functions of Myth in Determining Narrative and Tone in Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*," *Mosaic* 4, no.1 (1970): 110.

⁶ For a useful and still relevant description of this satire, see Harry Levin, *The Overreacher: A Study of Christopher Marlowe* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954): 37.

⁷ For a classic description of script theory, see John Gagon and William Simon, *Sexual Conduct: The Social Sources of Human Sexuality* (Chicago: Aldine, 1973). For a study that applies script theory to contemporary courtship, see Hanah Firth and Celia Kitzinger, "Reformulating Sexual Script Theory: Developing a Discursive Psychology of Sexual Negotiation," *Theory and Psychology* 11, no. 2 (2001): 209-232.

⁸ J.B. Steane, *Marlowe: A Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 324. Walsh comes to a similar conclusion, but attributes their confusion to the couple's misunderstanding of platonic love and Renaissance morality. Walsh, "Sexual Discovery."

⁹ For works that fully explore Leander's internal conflict, see David Lee Miller, "Death of the Modern: Gender and Desire in Marlowe's 'Hero and Leander'" *South Atlantic Quarterly* 88, no. 4 (1989): 757-787 and Steane, *Marlowe*, 302-336. See also Walsh, "Sexual Discovery," 43.

¹⁰ Leonard rightfully suggests another reason for Leander's hesitancy; he argues that Leander is only aroused when Hero resists him. This fetishization of violence can be shown to be an outgrowth of the social scripts of sonnets and a part of rape culture. Leonard, "Marlowe's Doric Music," esp. 63-66.

¹¹ For a full and complex exploration of the lack of agency in the poem, see Semler, "Marlovian Therapy."

¹² For a full description of this artificiality and its significance, see Cindy L. Carlson, "Clothing Naked Desire in Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*," in *Gender Reconstructions: Pornography and Perversions in Literature and Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002): esp. 26-27.

¹³ Leonard, "Marlowe's Doric Music," 72.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Carlson, "Clothing Naked Desire," 36.

¹⁶ Most scholarly commentary on the poem notices its difficult and complex tone. To cite but a few examples: Walsh calls the tone "comitragic;" Miller sees the poem as infused with an "affective dissonance;" Leonard notes that the narrator's tone moves wildly between "cynicism and naiveté;" and Collins fully explores the ambiguity of the tone throughout her essay. Walsh, "Sexual Discovery," 54; Miller, "Death of the Modern," 765; Leonard, "Marlowe's Doric Music," 57; Collins, "Sudrie Shapes."

¹⁷ Recently there has been a fierce debate over the efficacy and morality of trigger warnings. I will not attempt to reproduce this debate here because 1) there are simply too many articles to cite and 2) these articles, to the best

of my knowledge, exclusively take the form of personal essays published in periodicals such as *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. And although I find these articles thought provoking and often useful, they tend to focus on the latest anecdotal campus evidence in order to voice outrage or sympathy. In other words, they offer little substantive (empirical or theoretical) research into the efficacy of trigger warnings. Given the lack of previous research and the limited space allotted here, I can only offer my own anecdotal evidence: within this assignment, I find trigger warnings useful because they frame Marlowe's text as potentially dangerous and therefore significant, while also allowing me to express sympathy for sexual assault victims, whom almost always remain hidden from view.

¹⁸ Leonard, "Marlowe's Doric Music," 56.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Sarah R. Edwards, Kathryn A. Bradshaw, and Verlin B. Hinsz, "Denying Rape but Endorsing Forceful Intercourse: Exploring Differences Among Responders," *Violence and Gender* 1, no.4 (2014): 192. There has been a lot of work done in the social sciences on identifying how gender roles impact sexual violence. For a good summary of these studies, see Michael Flood and Bob Pease, "Factors Influencing Attitudes to Violence Against Women," *Trauma Violence and Abuse* 10, no. 2 (2009): 127-129.

²¹ See for instance the work of Peggy Reves Sanday, especially "The Socio-Cultural Context of Rape: A Cross Cultural Study," *Journal of Social Issues* 37, no. 4 (1981): 5-27, and "Rape-Free versus Rape-Prone: How Culture Makes a Difference," in *Evolution, Gender and Rape*, ed. Cheryl Brown Travis (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003): 339-362.

²² To facilitate these discussions, I would recommend using Patrick Cheney's and Brian J. Striar's edition of Marlowe's poetry. It contains detailed textual notes, Chapman's adaptation of *Hero and Leander* as well as Marlowe's translations of Ovid. Cheney and Striar, eds., *The Collected Poems of Christopher Marlowe* (New York: Oxford, 2006).

²³ For a contrasting opinion that reads Chapman's moralized version as a faithful continuation of the morality of Marlowe's poem, see Walsh, "Sexual Discovery."

²⁴ For a good description of how modern editors smooth out the text, which perhaps undermines the power of the poem, see Leonard, "Marlowe's Doric Music," 67-68.

²⁵ For a nuanced description of Marlowe's conversation with Ovid, see Semler, "Marlovian Therapy."

²⁶ See for instance William Keach's work which details the tradition of erotic narrative that Marlowe is working within, while still noting the typically provocative Marlovian approach in *Hero and Leander*. Keach, *Elizabethan Erotic Narratives: Irony and Pathos in the Ovidian Poetry of Shakespeare, Marlowe and their Contemporaries*. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1977).

²⁷ For Empedocles's influence on "Hero and Leander," see Leonard, Marlowe's Doric Music," 68 and Semler, "Marlovian Therapy," 174-176.